

A regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held Tuesday, November 27, 2018, at 7:30 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber.

President Lori Wilshire presided; City Clerk Patricia D. Piecuch recorded.

Prayer was offered by City Clerk Patricia D. Piecuch; Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza led in the Pledge to the Flag.

The roll call was taken with 13 members of the Board of Aldermen present; Alderman Schmidt was recorded absent.

Mayor James W. Donchess and Corporation Counsel Steven A. Bolton were also in attendance.

#### REMARKS BY THE MAYOR

##### Mayor Donchess

I just wanted to mention a couple of items tonight, first on our agenda is the proposed expansion of the elderly exemption. This is an outgrowth of the State ordered revaluation that was recently done. As we know the average home went up 23% but the range results across the residential sector among all the homeowners was very wide. Some went up only a little bit, some went up significantly more than 23% and what that created was a situation in which some of elderly residents, some of our senior citizens, have seen their taxes increase significantly because the amount of value above the exemption has expanded considerably.

The way that the exemption works is right now if someone is 65 years of age and makes \$50,000.00 or less, the first \$155,000.00 of value for their home is exempted from taxes. In the age range of 75 to 79, \$180,000.00 is exempted from taxes; and for anyone 80 years or older \$225,000.00 is exempted from taxes. Now of course our objective in creating this elderly exemption is to make it possible for senior citizens who have lived in our community, have worked here, and spent their lives here, to stay here and stay in their homes without being forced out because of any property tax burden that they have to bear.

In a high property tax State such as New Hampshire though this creates a dilemma in every community because for every dollar of tax relief which you give to the senior citizens, the rest of the tax payers have to bear the burden. So I've put on your desk an analysis a number of the larger communities in the State of NH and you will see that currently Nashua has the largest elderly exemption of any city in New Hampshire. Compared to Manchester, Nashua is in the column third from the right, compared to Manchester, instead of the \$155,000.00 for the 65 year old senior, they give \$109,000.00.

However, because of the revaluation we are proposing to expand the elderly exemption, raise it by about the same amount as the average home went up in the revaluation or about 25%. We are proposing to do this in a two-step approach; we would raise it this year, for this tax year which means people wouldn't have to pay their full tax bill or we would give a refund and then we would raise it again next year. So the two raises together would equal 25%. So for someone in the 65 year old age range, 65 to 75 the exemption would go from the \$155,000.00 that we have now to \$175,000.00 to \$192,000.00 next year. For persons 75 to 79 it would go from \$180,000.00 to \$203,000.00 to \$224,000.00 and for someone 80 years of age it would go from \$225,000.00 to \$254,000.00 to \$280,000.00. So if a person is 80 years old and makes less than \$50,000.00 if their home is assessed \$280,000.00 or less, they would not pay any taxes at all.

Currently the tax relief that we provide our seniors costs about \$3 million dollars loss in revenue; this proposed expansion would move that to about \$3.7 million. Now the Budget Committee has recommended this and I hope you will follow the recommendation of the Budget Committee. I was asked a couple of questions that I think I should answer now because they could come up again.

First of all, why not do the entire raise this year? Well the problem is that the tax rate has been set, the budget has passed and this was not in effect so the taxes that we are collecting this year are not the budget and the tax rate that was established this year do not account for this.

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So in essence we are really going to have to pay for whatever we do this year, next year. In other words, if we were to do the entire thing this year, it would cost us \$700,000.00 this year, \$700,000.00 next year, but all of that would have to be paid for next year so it would raise taxes by \$1.4 million. Now we have young families, we have others that are struggling to pay taxes, so it seemed the most measured approach to do this in a two-step manner so that our seniors would get some relief this year, more relief next year and we would be able then to account for it in next year's tax rate.

So Alderman O'Brien and some others are sponsoring it, I think it is the way to go and I hope you will pass it as it is proposed and as the Budget Committee endorsed it

On another subject, Madam Chair, the Holiday Stroll was this past weekend, Saturday night, many of you were there. I thought it was, as usual, a really great event, it is a tremendous and wonderful opportunity for Nashuans of every neighborhood, of all ages, to get together and share downtown and share the feeling of community. We had thousands of people walking down Main Street carrying candles, every year it is a very beautiful sight, I think it makes many people very happy and therefore it is a great event. This was the 25<sup>th</sup> Holiday Stroll, Alan Manoian who was the one who conceived of this 25 years ago and he spoke on Saturday night and who said that there were 400, 500, 600 people the first time. He was very glad, of course, to see all the progress and all the growth in this wonderful event. So again I just thank everybody for coming out, it was a great time and just again I think it demonstrates what a wonderful community that we have.

That is all I have Madam Chair.

#### RESPONSE TO REMARKS OF THE MAYOR

##### Alderman Lopez

I just want to get my response done now so that we don't have to debate on it later. So I was the one who kind of took exception to not just providing the blind and elderly tax credit in one go. But in the context that the Mayor put it tonight it makes a lot more sense. When we were reducing the budget for City Welfare, Family Assistance I did not like that but Alderman McCarthy and Alderman Dowd explained the concept of sticker shock and what was going to happen when everybody saw their property revaluations and why it was imperative that we keep our eyes on the impact to the overall tax payer. So I understand what is being said here, I am most concerned about people on fixed incomes trying to hold on to their houses, but as the Mayor has explained that's not likely to affect that demographic. I appreciate the explanation.

#### RECOGNITION PERIOD

##### **R-18-093**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess  
Board of Aldermen

#### **RECOGNIZING ALEXIS DURANT FOR HER DEDICATION AND VOLUNTEER WORK WITH THE HOMELESS**

Given its first reading;

**There being no objection, President Wilshire suspended the rules to allow for a second reading of R-18-093**

*Resolution R-18-093 given its second reading;*

#### **MOTION BY ALDERMAN LOPEZ FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-18-093 MOTION CARRIED**

Resolution R-18-093 declared duly adopted.



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READING MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

**There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the minutes of the Board of Aldermen meeting of November 13, 2018, accepted, placed on file, and the reading suspended.**

COMMUNICATIONS REQUIRING ONLY PROCEDURAL ACTIONS AND WRITTEN REPORTS FROM LIAISONS

From: Dorothy Clarke, Deputy Corporation Counsel  
Re: Proposed Amendment to R-18-073 (Legislation proposing a City Charter Amendment Regarding the Filing of Elected Vacancies)

**There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the communication, placed it on file and referred it to the Personnel/Administrative Affairs Committee.**

PERIOD FOR PUBLIC COMMENT RELATIVE TO ITEMS EXPECTED TO BE ACTED UPON THIS EVENING

COMMUNICATIONS REQUIRING FINAL APPROVAL

From: Lori Wilshire, President, Board of Aldermen  
Re: Committee Assignments

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ACCEPT, PLACE ON FILE AND APPROVE THE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS AS PRESENTED  
MOTION CARRIED**

From: Jim Donchess, Mayor  
Re: Contract for Board of Public Works Pension Administration

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ACCEPT, PLACE ON FILE AND AWARD THE CONTRACT TO HOOKER AND HOLCOMBE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$49,000  
MOTION CARRIED**

From: Jim Donchess, Mayor  
Re: Purchase Replacement for 2018 Ford Explorer Police Cruiser

**MOTION BY ALDERWOMAN KELLY TO ACCEPT, PLACE ON FILE AND APPROVE THE USE OF CERF FUNDS FOR THE PURCHASE OF A REPLACEMENT VEHICLE FROM M-H-Q MUNICIPAL VEHICLES  
MOTION CARRIED**

PETITIONS - None

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS - None

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Finance Committee..... 11/15/2018

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the November 15, 2018, Finance Committee accepted and placed on file.

Special Personnel/Administrative Affairs Committee..... 11/19/2018

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There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the November 19, 2018, Special Personnel/Administrative Affairs Committee accepted and placed on file.

CONFIRMATION OF MAYOR'S APPOINTMENTS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

**There being no objection, President Wilshire removed R-18-073 from the table.**

**R-18-073**

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Brian S. McCarthy  
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman Jan Schmidt  
Alderman Tom Lopez  
Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws  
Alderman-at-Large Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja

**PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CITY CHARTER RELATIVE TO FILLING  
VACANCIES ON ELECTED BOARDS BY MAJORITY VOTE OF THE REMAINING MEMBERS  
OF THAT BOARD**

Given its third reading;

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN CARON TO RE-REFER R-18-073 TO THE PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATIVE  
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE  
MOTION CARRIED**

Resolution R-18-073 re-referred to Personnel/Administrative Affairs Committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – ORDINANCES

**O-18-029**

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman Ken Gidge  
Alderman Linda Harriott-Gathright  
Alderman-at-Large Brandon Michael Laws  
Alderman Tom Lopez  
Alderman June M. Caron  
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly  
Alderman-at-Large Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja  
Alderman-at-Large David C. Tencza  
Alderman Jan Schmidt

**INCREASING THE EXEMPTION AMOUNT FOR THE BLIND, ELDERLY, AND DISABLED TAX  
EXEMPTIONS BY 25% TOTAL OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS**

Given its second reading;

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO AMEND O-18-029 IN ITS ENTIRETY BY REPLACING IT  
WITH THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS RECOMMENDED BY THE PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATIVE  
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

ON THE QUESTION



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Alderman Dowd

For the public could we cover what were the changes?

Alderman O'Brien

I don't have the particular facts right in front of me.

President McCarthy

Alderman O'Brien, I can have the attorney describe it if you prefer.

Alderman O'Brien

I know it had to do with the changing to make it easier for the people in the office.

Stephen Bolton, Corporate Counsel

The amount of the exemption in each case has been rounded to the nearest thousand essentially so it didn't come out a more difficult and less practical number when trying to explain. So everything ends in an even thousand instead of 683 or whatever it would be.

Alderman Dowd

I ran into former Alderman Chasse at the Stroll and he wanted to ensure that we continue to what he always proposed, explaining the changes to the public.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you Madam President, exactly what Corporate Counsel has said, in looking into this, what the amendment was brought forward, because when you are dealing with some of the elderly and you are dealing with numbers for \$1,582.67, it was basically just rounded off like Corporate Counsel said, it made it easy, did nothing with the original proposal, we are still going to hit the 12.5 and 12.5, it is a tiered effect thing and we will come to the 25% which will help out our elderly. I think it is better all the way around and it is easier for the public to understand it. Thank you.

## **MOTION CARRIED**

## **MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF O-18-029 AS AMENDED**

### ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Jette

I would just like to clarify that for the elderly exemption as the Mayor explained this is not for everybody, for all of the elderly. Besides reaching the age requirements there are also income limitations as the Mayor mentioned, the \$50,000.00 per person or per married couple but also an asset limitation of \$150,000.00 excluding the home that is being subject to the property tax. So it is not all the elderly that are going to be able to take advantage of this, it is restricted to people with those income limitations and asset limitations.

Alderman O'Brien

To reaffirm what Alderman Jette has said, it appears that the numbers that were brought before the committee is we are dealing with 600 residents. But keep in mind that these are 600 residents that really are in need, like I say, people who are blind or elderly and do not meet the criteria and that

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\$50,000.00 I think we can all agree that qualifier is proper and these people do need some attention particularly with the State revaluation that was mandated upon and that came upon us. This seems like a fair way for the City to react, thank you.

### **MOTION CARRIED**

Ordinance O-18-029 declared duly adopted as amended.

### **NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS**

#### **R-18-094**

Endorser: Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderwoman Mary Ann Melizzi-Golja  
Alderman Tom Lopez  
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman Ken Gidge  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

#### **APPROVING THE COST ITEMS OF A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NASHUA BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE NASHUA TEACHERS' UNION, LOCAL 1044, AFT, AFL-CIO, UNIT C, SECRETARIES FROM JULY 1, 2018 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2022 AND RELATED TRANSFERS**

Given its first reading; assigned to the BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE by President Wilshire

**There being no objection, President Wilshire suspended the rules to allow for the first reading of a resolution received after the agenda was prepared**

#### **R-18-095**

Endorser: Mayor Jim Donchess  
**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND APPROPRIATION OF \$119,100 FROM THE KRESGE FOUNDATION INTO PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES GRANT ACTIVITY "CREATING A CULTURE OF PREVENTION"**

Given its first reading; assigned to the HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE by President Wilshire

### **NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES – None**

### **PERIOD FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Fred Teeboom, 24 Cheyenne Drive. Good evening, I am here to introduce Lynn Berry. You may have read the newspaper recently that had an article about Lynn Barry, an editorial about Lynn Berry and I'd like to briefly mention her before I introduce her. Lynn Barry is 86 years old. Lynn has been a 63 year resident of Nashua. She is probably the feistiest 86 year old that I've ever met. She has owned a business in Nashua for 25 years and paid taxes to the City all through that time.

Lynn Berry fell on some bad times and she needed some help, she needed some help to repair a broken water pipe, hot water pipe in a mobile home and she didn't have quite the cash to pay for that. She got some estimates that came to \$100.00 to \$200.00, basically needed like a shark back coupler inserted into a section of the pipe. Because she didn't have the money she contacted the City, the City put her in touch with the HUD program office and now Ms. Barry has \$1100.00 mortgage on her home. That is not right. The system failed her. We failed her. We need a better system than what happened to Ms. Barry. I'll let her tell her own story, she's perfectly capable of it, she will be the next speaker Ms. Chairman.



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Lynn Berry 21 Marina Drive. Good evening, I was very frustrated about this progress and a lot of the things that really infuriated me that number one they didn't even use a Nashua or New Hampshire contractor, they got a contractor from Worcester, Mass. I got quotes from people, I live at Jensen's Park, and they have maintenance people there and they came and they opened up the bottom of the mobile home so that it would be easily accessible. Then I had a plumber go in there and give me an estimate and he said it would be between \$150.00 and \$200.00.

So then when the City sent over this representative of HUD, he told me he wouldn't start the work until I signed this lien on my house, which upset me very highly. So the gentleman came and he spent a good two hours at my house and I'm retired and I know how long he stayed there. He wasn't there for more than two hours and he left. And he left it all open and I thought he was coming back, I thought he wasn't finished. I waited a day, two days, three days and finally he didn't call back and I called the gentleman at City Hall and I said, "Is he finished" and he said, "I think so" and I said, "Well I think you better come look at this, it's all opened up to the weather and it isn't finished, he didn't come back". So he said, "Well let me look into it".

The next thing I know, the day after that, the gentleman came back and then he argued with me that he wasn't going to just close it up, he wasn't going to put insulation. That really set me off, because I said, "You can't close it up in a mobile home and not put insulation". And he said, "Well it's not in the work order" and I said, "Well it should be". So I finally got him to put the insulation in and close it up but that was after he came back a second time and I said this is unbelievable, I can't believe the City of Nashua would have something like that for the elderly, I think it is a disgrace. Thank you.

Laurie Ortolano, 41 Berkeley Street. Good evening, I wanted to share a little more information with you looking at some of the assessment data. We had the opportunity over the Holiday weekend to get ahold of KRT's data base in a form that we could actually look at and manipulate. It would be my request to the Aldermen that in the future if we do and when we do another assessment that we could look at the possibility of having that type of data that KRT provided in PDF form which was basic and did not include a lot of the fields, be provided to the public to in Excel or a readable form so that we can, as the public, work with that data to kind of see what went on in our neighborhoods and get what we need to get. It would be so easy to put it out that way and it does not have the level of data that the Nashua system would have in case we are concerned about manipulations or privacy; but it would make it so much easier for us to look at our neighborhoods and to make comparisons to streets and properties around Nashua.

In the process of really looking at the data we started wondering why we didn't get a report from KRT, we paid them what seemed to be almost half a million dollars to do an assessment for us. Next week I will be going into City Hall under the RSA request that my attorney wrote to look into some of the documents that the City is putting together and one of them was KRT correspondence. I don't know if there is a report from KRT that summarized what they saw when they did their assessment or what the distribution was. We hear the Mayor tell us tonight that the average increase was 23% or 24%, we came up with 26% in our data base, so you know, you always worry when you transfer data base that you didn't get it all as clean as you want or you know, it is a lot of work to bring one in. We had other residents in Nashua that worked on it and put it together, so it wasn't us doing it alone.

It certainly would be nice if the professionals through KRT would give us that data clean and we would be able to know for certain if we are correct, but we are in the right ballpark. It just seems that we missed a great opportunity hiring a company and paying as much as we did if we did not get a report to look at what happened in our community when it came to assessing, where we hit these pitfalls and take this data and have our assessing office use it to make improvements in the process by which they are assessing. There clearly is room for improvements.



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I think when you look at the history of the last ten years, we came out of 2008 which was a nightmare, had to be a nightmare for all assessing offices. The crash of the real estate market was tremendously difficult; and in 2010 they did a reassessment that was not an easy task; 2013 they did a reassessment. My observation of that, because it is on the data cards is that we over-corrected, heavily. I know in my neighborhood, they cut houses \$100,000.00 which was in some instances 25%, it was just so steep, when the equalized ratio in 2010 was 1.1.

So I noticed we went up streets and gave \$30,000.00 discounts to every home, whether it was worth \$200,000.00 or it was worth \$300,000.00, it wasn't percentage based. It was just a single swoop cut and I think that led to part of the problem in this assessment cycle. We found condo units that had been dropped from \$120,000.00 to \$70,000.00 in 2013 that are now up to \$130,000.00 from KRT coming in 2018. So it was a total boomerang process for the people in those communities. I am disappointed that the assessing office and our chair or our manager didn't say, "Hey we need to get a report. Give us the distributions." That KRT data base is listed by Ward, every Alderman could have had a Ward report, really simple to run, to know what happened in my Ward? What was the increase, where are the problem areas? Who might I be hearing from? How simple would that be?

And then we would get to work in the communities and neighborhoods that are messed up and we would be putting some extra focus time into those areas to correct it, because there is a lot corrective work that needs to be done. I was out in my neighborhood today walking a dog and got stopped from two people from the other end that had gotten their tax bills and one guy put the spread sheet together. He knew I was the person being public and he was like, "Oh my god, what happened to my house, how did this happen, how did I go from the 300's to the upper 500's, what happened in a week when all this changed over". It is hard for people to understand. And then they say, "Well I looked down the street and there are a whole bunch of houses in the 300's, we are all over the map over here, what happened". I know, yes I understand that, it is a problem. It all has to do, I did meet with the Board of Assessors, it was a good meeting. It has to do with how we capture our permits and how we handle our MLS data in-between assessing cycles.

It is abundantly clear to me that we do not value renovations and home improvements the way that the sales market tells you we should value it. We are undervaluing grossly, I mean it is ridiculous. All assessors, all good assessors will tell you, it is all about the sales data. This business is about the sales data and that is why when we abate, we only allow people to come in, working off of sales data. We don't allow them to use comps that are not sales based because the sales data is the hard data. It makes perfect sense, I understand that. But the assessors should be operating on that sales data too. Every time they look at a property they need to be asking themselves, what will this property bring in a market sale? What would it bring when they look at these improvements. I am finding lots of permits for home renovations, major home renovations, that bring \$10, \$15, \$20, \$30K to the property when they assess it.

Then when I look at the sales data and I looked at substantial homes that sold – when you look at a house that undergoes a home renovation, you are getting between, in neighborhoods all over Nashua, especially for the homes in the high 200's or 300 range, when they completely renovate that house I could show you 10 sales that the house popped \$180,000.00 to \$200,000 to \$225,000.00. They are hot and they go and there's a lot of data to support that. It is right in our neighborhood and that is one the reasons when I looked at your permit that I was concerned, Mr. Mayor, because it was so under-valued for the work done and any other house, there are three or four houses right around your neighborhood that when they did that level of work, their homes sold for \$150, \$200,000.00 more. They really get that pop.

I feel that we are just not principled in the office down there, that we just don't have practices in place. I was very clear with the Board of Assessors that I felt policy needed to be created. I told them that it says in the mission statement that their role is to review and make certain that the Assessing Office is compliant with their policies. Well there appear to be none, so I encourage them to perhaps encourage



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the Assessing Office to create some. It just seems like there should be something down there. I know that legal counsel and members of City Hall, the Mayor, are very concerned about the time that I am wasting with staff, that I have overstayed my welcome. I have to tell you it is enormously difficult for me to access this data.

The property cards you cannot get on your computer at home, the data base that is available in the house at your home is not a clean data base and it says right on the web site that there are errors in this data and basically you can't trust it. So I can't do it from home and when I go into the Assessing Office, I can use the computer but it will not bring up the format of a property card. I can't get the data that I need, unless I print the card out. So I have to use some staff time, and I do it all myself but then it goes to the printer and they have to charge me and I pay and sort them and count them and send me on my merry way. You know, I had asked the Assessing Office for help months ago in compiling our house and it was Steve Hamilton up at the DRA I had three good conversations with him. And he gave me some questions that I would be able to ask my Assessing Office for help. They were not willing to answer those questions. Their immediate was no, they are not going to help me. He said one of the things you could ask about was comps. If you are looking at your property and you are confused about, he knew the effect of your build was an issue for me we talked about this. He said, "Ask for comps". I did, so did my assessing chief at the Lakes Region, she said, "just ask for comps, ask for help and ask them to give you comps".

I asked John Duhamel for comps, "Could you provide me with any comps or any policies to help me understand where my house EYB fell in my neighborhood". He never responded to the e-mail. So the only way for me to understand that was to go to City Hall and print the 55 cards and pay for it. And what I learned is we were the only property that was changed aggressively when we were assessed and that was great data for me to have. We were right at the top of the list. And I wouldn't have been looking so much and so deeply into the data, I look back at the way all of this has transpired, if somebody had shown me some professional courtesy in that office, and just helped me out, had a single meeting with me, got me some data, I wouldn't have been in there digging for every property card. If the guy had come back and said, "Oh you were the only house that was hit at this level, yes, ok, that may be a question, that's the data", I would have been at least happy to know that. And I wouldn't have had to spend time down there digging like I have dug. That's the level we are at.

I cannot emphasize enough how strongly I feel about professional courtesy in an office. You have one assessor down there who is so professional, any time I am in that office and anyone walks in and he is around and he happens to have good visibility, he will say to anyone, "Is there anything I can help you with, do you need anything?". The women in the office are A1 professional, the Chief, not cutting it. I have never seen a more unprofessional person in my life. I have had two conversations with him and in the second conversation a couple weeks ago, only twice, I've never had a meeting with this gentleman, the second conversation I had a couple weeks ago he actually had his head facing a wall while I was talking to him. Right in front of his staff I asked him if he could turn his head and look at me while I am speaking to him, to have to ask for that is absurd. It is absurd. And the issue of not really being at work really disturbs me. You have to take that job on full-time.

It would take very little for this management team or the Mayor's Office or the CFO to go in there and do a quick audit on what is happening with attendance and get that information pretty quickly, somebody has to care and look into it. I think a lot of our problems occurred when I called him a year ago, he wasn't willing to meet, it was a very hostile conversation, I was wrong about everything, permits are captured, sales data is done, you are wrong, you are wrong, you are wrong. And that is what got me hopping because I didn't feel I was wrong.

It is just really disappointing and with regard to our property card, I had another neighbor go in last week, I've had two now, they go to the professional assessor, the one I would recommend to anyone, and there's only one that I will recommend that somebody go to in that office, only one. And they had a question on the land issue on the cards, there is a bunch of neighbors who are really concerned with



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land valuation and the factors on the property card and I think there is a legitimate issue there. One of my neighbors has been hot on it. He went in, he got the assessor to meet with him, the assessor could not answer his questions, the assessor said, "I'll get back to you", the assessor called back three days later, he gave him an answer on the phone, my neighbor wasn't really satisfied with it, but was super appreciative that at least he got a response. That is more than we ever got in four years and we happened to be with the assessor that doesn't do that, that didn't do it from the beginning.

I think that difference in the assessors should not exist. Even three years that should not have existed, I shouldn't have felt like I needed to get a lawyer to get RSA information. I didn't know how to word my questions to this administration without having a lawyer do it for me. I didn't know how to ask for a document, because I have asked, I've asked for the qualifications of our assessors because the CFO has said they are all certified. I don't know if they are, we all here have stuff on ... people walking into a doctor who isn't a doctor, we all here are being duped because we are told what the right answer is but we don't really know. I said, "Well when were they certified and what are they certified in, who are they"? No answer nobody knows, but they are, just trust them, they are.

I want to point out one thing when it comes to assessing and assessing fairly and I told this to the Board of Assessors, when I looked at our street, on Berkeley Street, there were a lot of permits that were missed. But when I finally laid out all the permit data and I looked at what it showed, KRT came in and met with the Board of Assessors and the Board said to him, Rob Tozier, "are all these problems caused by people not pulling permits and they are doing work to their homes and we don't know about it" and Rob said, "I don't know, I'm not certain it could be the problem", right? How would he actually know and in reality when I went into the Board of Assessors, I said "Let me tell you what I see. I see lots of permits being pulled but I see the assessing people not going out to check on the permits or to close them with a visit". Tons, they are assessing at the desk off a picture.

On Berkeley Street there were 16 out of 35 permits pulled that were never visited or looked at. And I am talking significant valuations, they didn't go and in the process of not going they missed full home renovations, major changes, because we know we cannot just trust what is written on a piece of paper on what is happening with the permit. So 16 out of 35 were just never visited or seen and about 10 of them of those permits were simply not valued, forgotten to be valued for new kitchens and stuff. That is a lot, that is a lot of missed data that creates disproportionate assessments, it is very significant. You know, I was culling through the extra hundred permit cards I printed a week ago. I am going to tell you, I just scroll through them, scroll through them, I create a spread sheet and I take a look and I hit a property card where there were 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 permits pulled, a lot done. Three big ones and the rest were mechanical, electrical and plumbing and I said, "Oh this is a house that has a lot of work it is in my neighborhood" and then I look at the activity section and there hasn't been a measuring list since 1994 and they hadn't done a data verification since 1998. There are absolutely no visits on this card, all of that work and there isn't a visit out there. The valuations are so flipping low it is crazy, a brand new kitchen in an old home, yielded \$1,500.00 on the assessment.

When I see a card like this and this is a card that they don't go back to all the time, three big permits, no visits, no visits, no visits, you know what I do? I look at the name, who is this? It is a Board of Assessor's member, you know, do they understand how hard it is for us? That to me is a conflict and I don't like seeing that. They don't understand on the outside what is like for us if you are not having anyone come to your property or that assessing office isn't going to these properties' to capture this stuff. They are missing it on a big level so it is really disappointing. I am going to continue to work at it. I don't really care if you stonewall and I am sure that the City is going to provide nothing and I am not going to get any answers and I am going to go back to the questions I've asked and I know I won't get answers. Over time I am going to try and verify the data by going back down there and obtaining information but the only reason that I am doing that is because the City won't give you any answers and I am not going to sit back and just accept that it got taken care of or somebody looked at it. I am going to verify it. And I am going to continue to verify it. And I do everything I can, I haven't spent much time



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in the assessing office this week, they have been mobbed with people coming in with issues, it is a zoo in there.

I have stayed out of there because I know what is going on with the tax bills. But when things calm down a little bit, I will go back and do what I need to do. I hope that you folks as Aldermen can really get onboard, I would love to see you take a vote of no confidence in that office. At least as a minimum send a message that you've to clean it up. And you've got to care, it is really tough for us on the outside and I just don't see anyone on the inside doing and making the right decisions. And when you talk about exemptions, let's talk about Concord Street, let's talk about all the communities that give exemptions to historic homes. We never talk about that and they do and there is a street that is all over the map with properties that we largely know have so much trouble selling. And I feel very badly, I don't benefit with this tax, I don't live in the historic district, I am not pushing this for me, but these folks who try to maintain those little mini-museums down there have a brutal time trying to sell those houses and maintain them. When I see assessing done on those houses that jacks it \$100 or \$150 or \$200,000.00 above sales prices, I cringe. We should be very careful in that neighborhood on how we assess those homes. Thank you.

#### Mayor Donchess

I just want to correct any misimpression that may have been created with respect to the reference to my house because I think there was the implication that somehow I had influenced my own, this building permit. I think we took out and I actually brought my file, I've never even looked at it until I know Ms. Ortolano was investigating. We took out a building permit in maybe 2007 or 2008, I was neither an Alderman nor in office nor a Mayor and the permit said \$100,000.00. Of course I never even saw the paperwork at the time because I wasn't that interested in how this would affect my assessment and the project took a few years, the house is nearly 100 years old, so you have horse hair plaster, bathrooms are really small, we moved a door, stuff that didn't really effect value. There's a post and whatever it is, the old wiring system, a lot of that had to be replaced, the plumbing had to be replaced, some stuff had to be taken out of the basement.

The value went up \$30,000.00, at the time I didn't even look, and it was maybe 2010 or 2011, again I wasn't even in office, the implication is that somehow I influenced this as Mayor? I was not Mayor, I wasn't even an Alderman and I didn't even look at what the assessment was at all, I got the tax bill and I paid it. So the idea that somehow this was improper is completely a slander and it is not an issue that I thought about, I paid the taxes, I never looked at the property card I wasn't even really aware of how this affected my value until this came up and I looked back at the file. Because I knew this might come up the last couple of meetings, I have had my file, so the next meeting I will bring you my file and you can look at it, it is a totally an open book. This happened 10 years ago.

I think that certainly mistakes have been made, a lot of this was back in 2013, when you say that the condos went way down and went way up, that is a two-sided problem, I mean in the sense that yes, that sort of boomerang affect is a problem, but it meant that people paid lower taxes for five years. So if that had not happened, they would have paid more to the City. So a lot of these arguments are that individuals should be paying higher taxes, a building permit – enough value wasn't added, that means that some individual, some family who probably thinks they are paying too much, the argument is they are not paying enough. I am more concerned about the people whose values went up so much from not on Berkeley Street like Ms. Ortolano's house where the taxes went down 20%, those aren't the people that I am worried about. It is the people who have owned \$200,000.00 homes and their assessments went up 30 or 40%, those are the people that I think we should be concerned about.

As you know, because I have sent you the Memo, I am just going to make two more points, because I sent you the Memo, I asked John Griffin, CFO and Kim Kleiner, Chief of Staff to do a management audit and an efficiency audit of the Assessing Office and I think you got that Memo, right? But if you



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look carefully at the data, this all began on Berkeley Street, if you look at specific houses, and the specific factual statements that are made to support some of this, you will find that it is just riddled with errors. Take the Berkeley Street, that's where we started is Berkeley Street, the number one example says the assessment never went up in 8 years. You look at it, that is flat wrong. If you go down one by one by one, a few of them are correct, but most of them are wrong.

I am sure there are mistakes, a common mistake that has been made or misinterpretation I'll call it, is that around the revaluations of '13 and '18 that a building permit was not included in the value, well it wouldn't be because it wouldn't kick in until the next April, because that's the way the thing works, and then the revaluation factors that in. So there is no change, but the revaluation takes it into effect. So I will only get into this just because there was – you know I went on too long I am sure but this sort of implication that there was some sort of improper conduct on my own house, I mean this is again before I was an Alderman, before I was Mayor, just a private citizen, tried to fix up the house, the value went up \$30,000.00, I figured that out in the last few weeks, just because I looked at the property card and looked at my file for the first time.

I think we will do the audit, we will give you a report on the assessing office, we may recommend some changes and I can tell you that they are making a serious effort to look at everything that is taking place; staffing, all the procedures – everything that is going on down there.

#### REMARKS BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

##### Alderman O'Brien

Thank you Madam President. I would just like to reiterate what the Mayor has said about the Holiday Stroll, I would like to give my congratulations to Paul Shea, the Board of Director of the American Downtown and his exhausted staff. I say that kind of tongue in cheek because I know being on the former board of directors just how much, but I'll tell you, I'd also like to thank all the merchants that pulled it all together and made it very successful. Even though it was a 25 year celebration it was very good, it is a great venue for the family to come out, I took comfort in mentioning to Santa that I have been on my best behavior, so everything has been good.

The other thing that really struck me tonight, what a breath of fresh air to see a young lady such as Alexis Durant to do the type of work that she has done. I don't think the little recognition that the Mayor that you proposed, it was grand, the right thing to do, but probably not enough. I'd like to see more of a challenge out there to other people of her age to come and step forward. I mean if you want a quality City or you want any good program, you must be an active participant so I encourage the young people to probably follow her lead and step forward in this. But it was really a breath of fresh air and I thank her for it and I congratulate her on getting that award. Thank you.

##### Alderman Dowd

I took would like to thank Paul Shea and all the people that put effort into the Downtown Stroll. I talked to several of the business owners down there and that is one of their biggest days of the year. The more times that we can have the population and the Downtown celebrating the Downtown and taking part in these businesses, the better the City will be.

##### Alderman Klee

I too attended the Stroll and it was incredible. Paul Shea, as usual, I call him the Energizer Bunny, he's just, he was hopping around and doing all kinds of things. He is an incredible man. I'd also like to take a few moments and thank Alderman Lopez and Amber Loge for the work that they have done on the Delaney House getting all the decorations and creating that wonderful atmosphere for them. Thank you very much.



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Alderman Lopez

I was going to thank Alderman Klee for taking time to bring a bunch of trees that were donated and set them up with her husband and then make sure they were all properly cared for. I thought that was a very nice thing to do and I appreciated it.

I also wanted to comment on Alexis' example, proposing her recognition this week particularly just because we initiated it after Alderman McCarthy's passing and I know the Board was feeling a sense of loss, at the loss of a great leader. I know in my work working with non-profits I get to see people struggling to put their lives together but I also really get to see a lot of people showing leadership and making that happen. People who are organizing their own massive undertakings that never see the light of day, because at the end of the day it is what we need to keep moving in non-profits so I just wanted to call attention to the fact that there is the higher level leadership that has a visibility of us as Aldermen where we get to sit here every other week and be on TV for better or for worse and be seen leading. But there are also everyday a lot of people who are just doing their thing every day to make life a little bit better for someone, to encourage other people to do that and I just wanted to bring that to the Board's attention.

Finally I wanted to bring to the Board's attention that there is a Holiday Fair at Palm Square, the Arbor Restaurant, it will be this Saturday and it will be from 12 pm to 6 pm. So come by and celebrate the Holiday Spirit and support a good cause.

Alderman Caron

I would like to congratulate you for honoring Alexis, it is important for our community for our young people to get involved and when you see that, I think it motivates everyone to get involved. So without them we have nothing for our non-profits and agencies that who are dealing with difficult situations. And on that note, the Nashua Lion's Club will be holding its Annual Santa Breakfast this Saturday from 8:00 to 11:00 at the Nashua Senior Center. Santa will be there, the Annual Gingerbread Contest will be held, I understand that at this moment they have about 10 gingerbread houses, and if you haven't seen them, they are just magnificent.

Also, there will be a Craft Fair from 8 to noon, so come on down and have breakfast, see the crafts, see the gingerbread and then go over to Palm Square. Thank you.

Alderwoman Kelly

I feel that where I sit in the horseshoe I end up just repeating what everybody said, but I did want to say that I ran into Paul during the Holiday Stroll and he was in such good spirits and he did such an incredible job. I know he took a couple days off and he deserved that so I really appreciated that.

And I also have a comment about Alexis, it was just so inspiring to see someone find their passion and be so connected to it at such a young age so thank you for doing that.

Alderman Jette

First I would like to acknowledge the work that Ms. Ortolano is doing, whether everything she says is correct or not, I think she is raising some important issues and I am glad to see that the Mayor has initiated an audit of the Assessor's Office to try to answer her questions and the issues she has raised. I think it is so important that all of the taxpayers in the City, whether they are elderly and no matter what Ward they live in, I think it is important that people feel that they are being treated fairly, that their taxes are based on accurate information and that there are not differences in how they are being taxed as opposed to other people. I think people expect and deserve a feeling that our tax process is fair. I applaud the Mayor for taking that step and looking into that.

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I would like to acknowledge a gift I received from Alderwoman Kelly, it is a bag that says "Plastic ain't fantastic" kind of acknowledging the damage that plastic is doing to our environment and my meager efforts in trying raise our awareness about that.

And lastly, the Nashua Rotary Club is selling Christmas Trees at the Plaza that is out on Amherst Street near Pier One in front of Market Basket. The Demoulas Family very generously has donated or allowed us to use that parking lot. Our trees are not plastic, they are real trees, they are New Hampshire trees, so I encourage people to buy their trees from the Rotary Club. All profits go to local charities and my wife and I will be selling trees there this Saturday morning, so please come on by and buy your tree there. Thank you.

#### Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

I would just like to join everyone in congratulating Paul Shea and the volunteers downtown and the Board of Directors of GAD. I too heard very positive things from the merchants as well as people just down enjoying the evening. I think one of the things that is really nice to see is how many families are coming every year, it seems like there are more and more families and I know some things are starting a little earlier and I think that we are nicely growing the event for our families in the greater community. So thank you for all of your efforts.

I would like to thank Alderman Lopez for bringing Alexis and all of her efforts to our attention and through the presentation tonight to the attention of the greater community. I think that adults and youth in the community should be inspired by her. And I also think that we need to recognize her family and friends who have been supporting her. I think is important that as we look at young people in our community who are reaching out that we acknowledge that they do have their family and friends with them and just like each of us comes to this horseshoe with those who have supported us across the year, they are also growing leaders through their leadership. So hopefully they will expand the number of volunteers we have in our community. So thank you for bringing her to the community's acknowledgement and our awareness.

Two things, I got lots of phone calls because "Oh my gosh it is snowing and what is going to happen with my yard waste collection". It is going to December 7<sup>th</sup> so you can still rake leaves as the snow melts, it will be picked up. The other thing is people have been contacting me because as many of you know drainage in my neighborhood is a problem, we have a small lake at the end of Timberline periodically. If you are out walking or driving and you see leaves in the storm drains, if you are so inclined to remove them, that would be very helpful as we continue to get rains and have water backing up throughout the neighborhood.

One final thing, NRPC has the draft of the 2019 to 2045 it says here Nashua Area Metropolitan Transit Plan and it is going up on the website and it will be available for public comment so for you to review and make public comment. It is up for 30 days and then will be discussed at NRPC. So if you would like to take a look at that, it is on-line for you to look at. Thank you.

#### President Wilshire

I too would like to thank the Great American Downtown, Paul Shea, for all his efforts in putting on such a great event – 25 years it has grown tremendously and is quite an event. People from out of town say, "did you go to Nashua to that Stroll, it was really a good event" and so thank you to Paul Shea and Great American Downtown.

I'd also like to thank you Alderman Lopez for bringing Alexis Durant in to us and recognizing her efforts. She started at such a young age and it is so important to get young people involved.



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Alderman Lopez

I just want to point out, everyone has been thanking me but she's been working for years, all I did was nominate her.

Alderman Dowd

Just really quickly, yesterday the Mayor, myself, Alderman Jette and Alderman Klee stood out in the rain and the snow to watch the Ribbon Cutting for the Connection of the Pennichuck in Nashua to the Pennichuck East Utility in Litchfield. They laid 5,600 feet of pipe under the river to provide clean drinking water to Litchfield and beyond because of the pollution over there that they've been having. It was quite an event. Honorable Chuck Morris, the President of the Senate was there and I think we must've had about 40 people in a 10x10 space under a tent. But it is a very interesting site, it's kind of hard to find but it is going to provide a fantastic service for the community.

Alderman Klee

I just wanted to add one other thing, the trees that were donated to Delaney House were donated from a very incredible man, he is the manager of the Home Depot, Exit 6 and he donated the five live trees personally – not from Home Depot, but he donated five live trees, not plastic to the Delaney House and I wanted to thank him for doing that.

Committee announcements:

Alderman O'Brien

Tomorrow night, November 28<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. here in the Aldermanic Chamber we are going to have the Infrastructure Committee meeting. We will be approving the preliminary design of the Greeley Park Boat Ramp.

Alderman Dowd

Yes this evening we had the first reading of the secretary's contract for the school department and had to call a Budget Meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup> because by legislation we have to handle contracts in a timely manner. So I am going to have a meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss that one item.

Alderman Caron

Personnel will be meeting Monday December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. We have a lot of people coming in for appointments for various committees.

Alderwoman Melizzi-Golja

Tomorrow night's evening was originally scheduled as a joint Infrastructure/PEDC meeting and I know I will not be there because we have a meeting for the Joint Special School Committee and I wasn't sure whether or not we would have a quorum. So in not wanting to lack of quorum of one of the committees hold up that meeting, that meeting was re-posted this afternoon as being an Infrastructure meeting.

That being said, for members of PEDC who were planning on going, I would encourage you to go. It is certainly an infrastructure project but it is also something I think it is going to have an economic impact downtown and in the greater City. So to get an understanding of how that project is moving forward, would probably be useful and I know I will be watching that meeting at some point. So I would just encourage you to attend even though it no longer posted as a joint meeting. Thank you.

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Alderman Dowd

Yes I will add that you pointed out tomorrow evening and Thursday evening we will be interviewing five companies for architectural design of the new middle school project. Last week we as you all know because we put out a Memo, Harvey Construction was hired as the construction manager for that project and will be helping us moving forward. And I was going to call yet another meeting after Thursday, probably sometime next week if Ms. Lovering can find a date for me, to actually make the selection of the architectural company.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LOPEZ THAT THE NOVEMBER 27, 2018 MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN BE ADJOURNED**  
**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Attest: Patricia D. Piecuch City Clerk



\$25,000	\$38,500	\$25,000	\$33,400	\$35,000	\$28,700	\$23,000	\$39,600	\$25,000	\$37,000	\$5
\$35,000	\$50,000	\$34,000	\$45,800	\$50,000	\$38,700	\$31,000	\$48,800	\$35,000	\$50,000	\$5
\$50,000	\$200,000	\$75,000	\$90,000	\$150,000	S-\$55,000/M-\$78,650	\$70,000	\$133,700	\$60,000	S-\$90,000/ M-\$115,000	\$15
\$15,800	\$117,000	\$60,000	\$72,818	\$85,000	\$29,700	\$50,000	\$98,900	\$25,000	\$109,500	\$15
\$23,700	\$143,000	\$60,000	\$118,420	\$125,000	\$37,400	\$65,000	\$123,600	\$50,000	\$148,500	\$18
\$31,600	\$169,000	\$60,000	\$202,124	\$165,000	\$44,900	\$85,000	\$164,800	\$75,000	\$195,500	\$22
22	39	12	216	248	105	76	175	25	746	801
\$542,200	\$5,972,500	\$700,400	\$21,926,408	\$28,323,133	\$3,717,500	\$5,320,000	\$19,158,950	\$1,250,900	\$104,570,675	\$119,92
\$100	\$500	\$500	\$150	\$500	\$225	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$400	\$500
6 (72:28)/ (72:28-b)= 121	315	112	974	882	652	687	822	294	2532	2570 (72:28)/ 79 (72:28-b)= 2649
\$12,050	\$157,250	\$56,000	\$145,400	\$448,500	\$146,700	\$342,250	\$409,750	\$147,000	\$949,221	\$1,29
7	12	10	61	59	41	1 (72:29-a)/ 31 (72:35)	31	18	150	97
\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,400	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$700/\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,400	\$1,600	\$
\$14,000	\$24,000	\$14,000	\$122,000	\$118,000	\$82,000	\$62,700	\$62,000	\$25,200	\$234,384	\$19
\$500	\$143,000	\$60,000	N/A	N/A	\$29,700	N/A	\$98,900	\$25,000	\$109,500	\$15
0	5	11	N/A	N/A	26	N/A	34	6	162	78
\$0	\$715,000	\$660,000	N/A	N/A	\$558,900	N/A	\$2,665,500	\$116,300	\$15,844,975	\$9,15
\$15,000	\$75,000	\$15,000	\$120,234	\$40,000	\$16,500	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$15,000	\$135,500	\$7
2	3	4	31	13	15	9	5	1	40	43
\$30,000	\$225,000	\$60,000	\$3,395,518	\$520,000	\$247,500	\$360,000	\$250,000	\$15,000	\$4,640,932	\$2,85
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$29,700	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$84,100	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
\$572,200	\$7,181,500	\$1,491,350	\$25,321,926	\$28,843,133	\$4,933,100	\$5,680,000	\$22,339,261	\$1,382,200	\$125,056,562	\$137,11
240,757,802	\$1,159,137,723	\$259,691,394	\$4,030,230,653	\$2,810,913,612	\$1,796,036,300	\$2,066,841,475	\$3,896,223,165	\$550,902,487	\$9,004,365,407	\$8,148,41
241,330,002	\$1,166,319,223	\$261,182,744	\$4,055,552,579	\$2,839,756,745	\$1,800,969,400	\$2,072,521,475	\$3,918,562,426	\$552,284,687	\$9,129,421,989	\$8,285,61
0.237%	0.616%	0.571%	0.624%	1.016%	0.2739%	0.2741%	0.570%	0.250%	1.370%	1.655%
\$29.97	\$27.77	\$25.98	28.24/33.92	\$28.86	\$37.22	\$21.03	\$21.61	\$22.26	\$23.32	\$25.79
2010	2008	2007	2011	2008/2015	2017 (INCOME ONLY)	2007	2010	2005	2011	2010/2016 (I&A O
1,645	3,433	1,624	14,653	11,814	7,943	10,012	10,214	2,730	33,561	28,725
3,975	7,775	2,408	42,904	33,246	23,406	16,470	25,850	5,473	110,506	87,892
14	6	7	5	4	12	11	8	13	2	1